

## Dubbing Delon: Voice, Body, and National Stardom in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and his Brothers* (Luchino Visconti, 1960)

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The major French/Italian coproductions starring Alain Delon (*Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and his Brothers* (Luchino Visconti, 1960), *L'eclisse/The Eclipse* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1962), and *Il gattopardo/The Leopard* (Visconti, 1963)) have been little studied from the viewpoint of Delon's star image and performance style. One of the reasons for this is the relative neglect of star studies until recently within the discipline of Italian film studies: additionally, work on star studies in the Italian context has emphasized the need to view stars as "cultural symbol and conduit for ideas about gender, values and national identity" (Gundle 2008, 263) and so has been unable to account for the influence and importance of non-Italian stars working in Italian cinema. Much attention has also been paid to the female stars of postwar Italy such as Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida and their relation to changing conceptions of national identity; the reason why male stars have been comparatively neglected may be due to their perceived universality, in the sense that masculinity is presumed to be invisible or transparent while femininity is the marked, overly visible category.<sup>1</sup> The naturalizing of the connection between femininity and beauty (and, indeed, between femininity and women), and the marginalizing of male beauty, have allowed masculinity and male stardom to be taken for granted and to elude analysis in the Italian context.

Similarly, Alain Delon's star persona has been read, most influentially by Ginette Vincendeau, as tied to the context of French national cinema and identity: Vincendeau has said that Delon and Jean Paul Belmondo "redefined French stardom and offered parallel yet divergent visions of French masculinity" (2000, 158).<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, for reasons of space, I will examine only Delon's

performance style in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, probing the established definitions of his “impassive acting style” (Hayes 2004, 52) and “expressionless face” (Austin 2003, 82). I will raise the question of whether Delon’s critical status as an *homme fatal* who is “too beautiful” (Vincendeau 2000, 173) has obscured his performance style in these French/Italian films; I will also consider how the fact of dubbing his voice into Italian works to support or undermine his position as erotic object of the camera’s gaze. Finally, I will relate these questions of Delon’s mute beauty and vocal ventriloquism to the film’s use of melodrama, where silence and gesture take on a complex and significant status.

## Beauty and stardom

Delon has conventionally been considered within a paradigm of national cinema, which has been unable to fully account for his career outside French cinema. Recent contributions, however, have started to reassess him from a transnational perspective: Mark Gallagher (reprinted in this volume) has noted that Delon should be detached from the French context and read through the lens of cosmopolitanism, both in terms of his work across different cinemas and production systems and in terms of the model of pan-European stardom he represented in the 1960s: “in the industrial makeup of films in which he stars, in their settings and locations, and in his casting, as characters of multiple nationalities and social classes, Delon belongs indisputably to inter- and transnational film industries and screen cultures” (2013, 77). This reading of Delon in terms of a “cosmopolitan masculinity” (2013, 78) chimes with Vincendeau’s earlier assessment of him as “cosmopolitan playboy” (2000, 158) and also accords with Nick Rees-Roberts’ assessment of Delon’s “continental look” (2012, 85) and cosmopolitanism.<sup>3</sup> As Gallagher notes, as well as the prestige collaborations with auteurs such as Visconti and Antonioni, Delon played Italian characters in eleven films between 1960 and 1974, including in comedies such as *The Yellow Rolls Royce* (Asquith, 1964) and *Che gioia vivere/The Joy of Living* (Clément, 1961). Thus it is difficult, he argues, to fix Delon’s star persona in terms of its indexing of a notional Frenchness rather than of a “charismatic European masculinity” (2013, 82).

At the risk of reinstating the model of auteurist prestige, I am going to focus on the collaboration between Visconti and Delon on *Rocco*; the aspect I want to concentrate on is Delon’s transnationalism (manifested in *Rocco* of course at a

linguistic level, by the fact that he was dubbed into Italian) and how this interacts with the critical trope of Delon's "excessive" beauty. In Visconti's film Delon plays the eponymous Rocco, one of the five Parondi brothers who move with their mother from southern Italy to Milan in the throes of Italy's economic miracle of the late 1950s. The saintly Rocco sacrifices himself endlessly for the good of the family, becoming a boxer in order to pay off his brother Simone's debt and giving up the love of his life, the prostitute Nadia, after she is raped by Simone, who is also her ex-boyfriend.

It is interesting that the mass of criticism on *Rocco* pays little attention to Delon's performance; Italian criticism, in particular, has been much exercised about the film's status as meticulously researched document of the Italian boom period or as excessive familial melodrama. Sam Rodhie's BFI Classic book on *Rocco*, for example, does not mention Delon at all (1992).<sup>4</sup> Equally, the general attention to Delon's star persona, physicality, and charisma has not allowed for an equivalent attention to his modes of vocal performance: although Mark Gallagher notes that Delon "lacks cultural specificity" and says of *Rocco* that "even the realist *Rocco and his Brothers*, produced with the Italian industry's standard post-synchronized dubbing, defines Delon's character in physical and psychological terms, and does not require him to speak in a voice evocative of Rocco's rural, working-class background" (2013, 82), he is virtually alone in mentioning the fact that Delon was dubbed into Italian. This lack of discussion of the dubbing is, in all likelihood, due to the general neglect of the voice in theories and analyses of performance. Pamela Wojcik has noted how the "privileging of the visual over sound in most film theory" reinforces the idea of sound as secondary, and she asserts that voice acting and dubbing are normally viewed as "somehow lesser forms of acting, an assumption that posits the actor's body as his true instrument and the voice, if unfastened from the body, as somehow lacking" (2006, 71). The bodily focus in star studies means that the expressive characteristics of the voice, its manipulation through technology and sound design, and its relation to *mise-en-scène* are rarely addressed.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to think about some of the ways in which Delon's supposedly "excessive" beauty might intersect with these neglected questions of voice and accent: Delon, as mentioned above, has been read by Vincendeau as "too beautiful" (2000, 173) and as an *homme fatal* whose "cruel beauty is deadly to those around him and often to himself" (2000, 176). She argues that "Delon's beauty and objectification by the camera bring to the fore the issue of accommodating an eroticized male figure in the context of mainstream cinema,

traditionally seen as a ‘problem’” (2000, 173–74). Graeme Hayes agrees, talking of Delon’s “narcissistic spectacle of erotic male display” (2004, 47);<sup>6</sup> this is clearly visible in the many languorous close-ups and in the framing of Delon in *Rocco*, to the extent that it might certainly be plausible to include this film in the category suggested by Vincendeau, of “films which simply narrativize Delon’s beauty” (2000, 174).

The established trope of Delon’s “femininity” is obviously contiguous with this: Hayes talks of Delon’s “ambiguous masculinity” (2004, 42), his passivity, and his lack of “hypermasculine performativity” (2004, 52), while Danielle Hipkins mentions how Delon-as-Rocco’s “delicate features and silken hair *feminize* him” (2006, 201, her emphasis).<sup>7</sup> The idea that the male star who is the object of the look is rendered passive and “feminine” relates to Kenneth MacKinnon’s view that the male star “who presents his body as an object of the cinematic gaze seems to forfeit his reputation for unassailable masculinity” (1997, 34).<sup>8</sup> D. A. Miller says that when Delon turns his face to the camera in one of the lingering close-ups, “he is *letting himself be looked at*, offering his exquisite face and flesh to the camera with the thrilling submissiveness of an odalisque” (2008, 16, his emphasis). One of the principal ways in which the camera’s lingering on Delon’s face and body in *Rocco* has been read is through the prism of biography (or anecdote, or gossip), drawing on the frequent, though never substantiated, rumors about the romantic relationship between a director and a star. This is a common type of reading of Visconti and his male stars: for example, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith has written of Visconti’s “erotic investment” (2003, 212) in his male stars, including Massimo Girotti in *Ossessione/Obsession* (1943), Delon and Helmut Berger in *La caduta degli dei/The Damned* (1969), *Ludwig* (1972), and *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno/Conversation Piece* (1974). Referring specifically to Girotti in *Ossessione*, Nowell-Smith notes what he calls the “excessive focus” on Girotti’s body and claims that the film’s “homosexual subtext” pushes focus from the character’s actions onto the body of the actor.<sup>9</sup> Derek Duncan has pointed out how this reductive notion of Visconti as a “gay director” (Nowell-Smith 2003, 212) and the fixation on Girotti’s body as a “symptom of Visconti’s homosexuality” (Duncan 2000, 103) ignore the ways in which sexuality and artistic production are linked and fail to take into account how a film like *Ossessione* “reveals something about how the technology of cinema encourages spectators to look at bodies in a certain way”—the muscular, vest-clad Girotti is constructed as an “improper” object of desire “in a medium that depends on the stability offered by the heterosexual, male gaze” (Duncan 2000, 104).<sup>10</sup>

Delon's beauty and impassivity in *Rocco* are also yoked to readings of his body as "implausible" (Nowell-Smith 2003, 125)—repeatedly, critics have noted that Delon is unconvincing as a champion boxer, purely because of his physique, and that the excessive attention on his face, via extended close-ups, speaks to an acknowledgment by the film that his body type is incorrect or inappropriate. So Cynthia Grenier declares him "too pretty" to convince,<sup>11</sup> while Miller comments on the film's "extraneous display" of "extraordinary male beauty" (2008, 13) and the "exquisitely handsome" Delon's implausibility.<sup>12</sup> Vernon Young is most hyperbolic, alleging that it is "difficult to accept this long-fingered faun as a career boxer" (1961, 17).<sup>13</sup>

## Dubbing the star

This reading of Delon's implausible physique, however, ignores the language issue: Delon was of course dubbed into Italian for *Rocco*, as with all his Italian films. This is something that the spectator on a certain level knows but might ignore or disavow when watching the dubbed print subtitled into English. Delon was not alone in being dubbed in *Rocco*, which was a polyglot production from the point of view of the recording process: French actress Annie Girardot (Nadia), like Delon, spoke her lines in French, as did Corsican Max Cartier (Ciro), while the Greek Katina Paxinou (Rosaria, the mother) was a veteran of Greek stage and screen, and the actor playing Vincenzo (Spiros Focas) was also Greek. All were dubbed into Italian.<sup>14</sup> Of the main characters, only Simone (played by the well-known star Renato Salvatori) spoke his lines in Italian. Mark Betz has written interestingly of the "loose play between actor and language, voice and body that is everywhere in operation in not only Italian but also French art cinema of the period" (2009, 86–87).<sup>15</sup> Dubbing becomes, as Betz suggests, a "site of incoherence" (2009, 56) in much European art cinema of this period and in films such as *Rocco* in which there is no authentic cut of the film, no "original" sound track. But it is also supposedly a site of incoherence in the sense that Mary Ann Doane, in her seminal essay on the voice in cinema, pointed to: Doane notes that the synchronization of voice to acting body on screen is partly about "perpetuating the image of unity and identity sustained by this body and staving off the fear of fragmentation." As she goes on to argue, "synchronization binds the voice to a body in a unity whose immediacy can only be perceived as a given" (1980, 47). Alongside Doane's view of the fragile union of synchronized voice to

visible body, we can read that of Shochat and Stam, who argued that dubbing, which can never create a match with the peculiar individuality of the original speaking voice, is “a kind of cultural violence and dislocation” (1985, 52).<sup>16</sup>

However, Doane’s influential idea that synchronized sound is a bearer of presence, and that synchronization of voice and image forges a harmonious “imaginary unity” (1980, 45) of the fantasmatic on-screen body, offering “the possibility of re-presenting a fuller (and organically unified) body” (1980, 34) has recently been robustly critiqued by Tom Whittaker, in relation to countries such as Spain and Italy that have routinely used dubbing and post-synchronization for a long time. Writing about Spain, Whittaker notes that the ubiquitous presence of the dubbed voice “pointed conspicuously to its technological mediation, at once throwing into doubt the homogeneity of the speaking subject and revealing the visibility of the post-production process” (2012, 295). Whittaker thus argues that Doane’s “harmonious imaginary unity,” which is based on the sound practices of Hollywood cinema, cannot account for the experiences of non-English-speaking audiences, accustomed to seeing their own language often “quite conspicuously out of synch,” emanate from the mouths of foreign stars. As he puts it, “unmoored from the body, the voice would appear to carve out its own space within the film” (2012, 295). Whittaker’s work is in dialogue with that of Antje Ascheid, who has argued convincingly, against Shochat and Stam’s view of dubbing as violation, that “for those spectators *well conditioned* to accept the dubbed motion picture the impression is a radically different one. In these cases the dubbed film is perceived as an entirely new product.” She suggests that the dubbed version produces “new” characters, “uttering a *translated*, which always also means interpreted, appropriated and recreated *new text*” (1997, 33, her emphasis). Ascheid is of course talking about the dubbing of entire films into the target language rather than the mixed practice on display in films such as *Rocco*. However, it is true that, as dubbing and post-synchronization were standard industry practices in Italy since the 1930s, Italian spectators were indeed well conditioned to accept it.<sup>17</sup> The prevalence of post-synchronization in Italy, since the passing of the law in 1933 that required all foreign films to be dubbed into Italian, and the rejection of subtitling, have created, it can be argued, a highly aware spectator who takes on an active role in “anchoring the image to the sound” (Valentini 2007, 177). As Valentini argues, dubbing “imposes a mode of listening that is aware of the heterogeneous character of the sound and images, and constructs a spectator who is complicit but also savvy at attaching voices to faces, accustomed to create a soundtrack for the film out of the sonic signs

coming from the speakers” (2007, 175). In this way, the labor of the spectators is that of suturing the rupture between voice and body, a labor for which years of watching and hearing dubbed and post-synchronized films have prepared them. This labor goes relatively unnoticed and little comment is passed upon it, apart from in cases where the dubbed voice is deemed flagrantly inappropriate. It is in this context that, in relation to performance and voice, Betz argues that “in the Italian-dubbed, English-subtitled version of *Il gattopardo* Burt Lancaster and Alain Delon become, *are*, Italian as an effect of the spectator’s own desire for imagined nationhood through his or her interlingual relation to the film” (2009, 88, his emphasis).

The professionalization of dubbing in Italy, which led to a kind of vocal star system whereby the dubbing artists became as well known as the foreign stars in some cases, also, however, led to a standardization of the Italian dubbed voice.<sup>18</sup> It is generally a voice that is “impersonal and non-regional” (Ferrari 2011, 31) and has been described as “a standard voice, metallic and slightly echoing” (Fink, quoted in Valentini 2007, 197). The idea of dubbing as inevitably effecting a kind of “cultural leveling” or blandness is a familiar one, and it is certainly true that the dubbed voice replaces the “acoustic signature” of the original with another kind of vocal signature.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the case of Delon in Italy is slightly peculiar, as unlike other foreign actors, he was not regularly dubbed by the same dubbing artist and therefore there is no consistency in his vocal “fingerprint” or signature. Delon was dubbed in *Rocco* by Achille Millo, a Neapolitan-born actor, although Rocco’s voice is not marked by a Neapolitan accent.<sup>20</sup>

## The face and the voice

These reflections on the voice and its distinctiveness become more pressing when we view the film using its French dialogue track: one of the things that we notice about Rocco, in fact, is just how little he speaks.<sup>21</sup> For much of the first part of the film he is a near-mute, even mocked by the girls with whom he works for his shyness and is called “Sleeping Beauty.” As a consequence, there is an increasing focus on his body and his face, via extensive close-ups, with several moments where he appears to gaze directly into the camera silently. In the scene where Rocco and Simone lie in bed after Rocco has passed on the message to Simone that Nadia has left Milan, there is an excessively long and tight close-up on Rocco’s face as he appears to gaze at the camera (Figure 4.1). This narratively





**Figure 4.1** Delon as Rocco in a prolonged close-up in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and His Brothers* (1960)

unmotivated gaze, which lasts over twelve seconds, accompanied by the main motif of the melodramatic Nino Rota score, represents the moment that Miller described as “Delon letting himself be looked at,” although Miller qualifies that reading by asserting that the close-up here becomes so extreme that “it transforms the homoerotic image into a deathly one” and “the living pin-up droops into almost a morgue slide” (2008, 16). The terms of this discussion, though, illustrate the degree to which Delon is here read as silently passive, as an erotic and/or deathly beautiful image.

The nature and significance of Rocco’s silence need to be interrogated: this silent, hyperbolic close-up comes at the end of Simone’s long, bitter speech about Nadia’s worthlessness. Although Simone keeps turning his gaze to Rocco as he speaks, the camera does not follow that gaze as we might expect and remains focused on Simone. It is only when Simone has finished speaking and has turned over in bed, pulling the covers over him, that the camera pans over to the other bed where Rocco is lying. Rocco’s response to Simone’s last injunction (“if I ever see her again I’ll turn the other way. If you see her, tell her that!”) is to turn his face to the camera and lift his arm behind his head. Rocco’s mute face here, which dissolves into the next shot, of him leaving the army barracks after which he will bump into Nadia, is the face of destiny, signaling a decisive narrative moment and the direction the film will go in. The meaning of Delon’s contemplative silence here has to be read through or against his facial expression: if the close-up, in Doane’s words, “requires no language” (2003, 93), it offers itself as “an intense phenomenological experience of presence, and yet, simultaneously, that



deeply experienced entity becomes a sign, a text, a surface that demands to be read" (2003, 94). She also reminds us that it is the facial close-up that, "together with the voice, allow[s] us a privileged access to the humanity of the other" (2003, 106).

Alongside these charged silences and lingering close-ups runs the film's strong current of melodrama, which is often interpreted through its most emotionally charged and hysterical scenes—the rape of Nadia, her dramatic murder cross-cut with Rocco's boxing victory, the high pitch of hysteria when Rocco finds out Simone is a murderer. But it is important that we also bear in mind the sense of melodrama as, in the work of Peter Brooks, the "text of muteness" (1995, 56). In classical melodrama silence operates as an index of innocence, of victimhood, often standing for the inability to defend oneself against the Law. As Brooks says, mute gesture "is an expressionistic means—precisely the means of melodrama—to render meanings which are ineffable, but nonetheless operative within the sphere of human ethical relationships" (1995, 72).

Rocco's silent close-ups elsewhere function as an index of sacrifice: when he and Ciro and Vincenzo visit the corrupt boxing promoter Morini to find out how much money Simone owes him, again the close-up on Rocco's face as he swings round to face the camera signals his acceptance of his destiny. The spectator knows that Rocco is deciding to sacrifice himself for Simone, by agreeing to the boxing career he does not want, in order to pay Simone's debt. Close-ups thus position Rocco as inexplicable victim: when Vincenzo bewilderedly asks Rocco why he is doing this as he hates boxing, Rocco's close-up is accompanied by his words "is there another way to save Simone from his fate?" and a further, lingering, close-up. The inexplicable nature of Rocco's sacrifice is of course heightened by the fact that by this point in the film Rocco has witnessed Simone rape Nadia, punishing her for her betrayal of him when she started secretly dating Rocco. The rape scene also shows us Rocco's muteness, as after being forced to watch Nadia being raped, he weeps, and she staggers over to him, begging him to "say something." Rocco merely covers his face, and Nadia walks off, watched by all the men. This moment, which Hipkins (2006, 204) terms "a moment for which few spectators can really forgive [Rocco]," nonetheless aligns Rocco and Nadia as victims of Simone and of a malignant destiny. The climax of this shared victimhood is reached during the film's use of crosscutting between Rocco and Nadia, when Nadia is murdered by Simone at the end of the film. The crosscutting between Rocco's championship bout and Nadia's stabbing by Simone sees Nadia raise her arms in resignation as Simone approaches with

his knife and Rocco raising his arms in triumph as he wins the bout, having committed his life to the redemption of Simone and the payment of his debts.

Rocco/Delon's silence, however, must be read in tandem with his mode of speech and its presentation in the film. This is particularly evident in key scenes, such as the encounter between Rocco and Nadia on the roof of the Milan Duomo after the rape, when Nadia begs Rocco to take her back. We can note several things here: firstly, Nadia's impassioned diatribe against Simone, shot from above, with Delon's face obscured from the camera, is received impassively by Rocco, who tells her merely that she must return to Simone. Rocco then presses his face into the wall as he delivers his short speech of recrimination for himself and Nadia ("we thought we could start a new life together, without thinking of the harm we were doing to others"). It is only when Nadia impatiently cries "why are you tormenting me so?" that Rocco turns his face toward the camera, and a lingering close-up shows his beautiful face marked by bruises and a band-aid, with a single tear running down his cheek, eyes half-closed in suffering (Figure 4.2). His only response to Nadia, apart from the tear, is to say simply "we will never see each other again."

Rocco's lack of language is compensated for by the lingering close-up here which reveals his own victimhood. The single tear of melodrama, for Steve Neale, occurs in the space or gap where emotional meaning cannot be fully conveyed: "it is a gap marked not only in the significance of gesture and the inarticulate cry, but also in the non-coincidence of points of view and knowledge" (1986, 19).



**Figure 4.2** Delon as Rocco suffering in close-up in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and His Brothers* (1960)

The knowledge the spectator has of Rocco's motivations is never adequate, and the frustration that Nadia has as she shouts "you'll regret this, but it will be too late! I hate you! I hate you!" and runs off articulates the spectator's frustration at Rocco's pointless sacrifice.

On the level of dialogue, Italian speakers will note here that the dubbed dialogue of Rocco in the last part of the scene becomes significantly more dialectal in quality, as he talks about his relationship with Nadia and his betrayal of his brother, inviting us to reflect, on the level of character, on Rocco's destructive attachment to his family and roots. Listening to the French soundtrack, in which both Delon and Annie Girardot perform in French, we hear the timbre of the voices, the intonation (of course even the French dialogue was post-synchronized), reminding us of Roland Barthes' words in "The Grain of the Voice," in which the "grain" is "the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue" (Barthes 1977, 182) that sets up an erotic relation with the body of the performer. Both Delon and Girardot have a much softer intonation in French, and Delon's dialogue in particular sounds much harsher and more metallic, in Fink's sense, in Italian. His pronunciation of the line in French, "we thought we could start a new life together" (*nous avons cru pouvoir recommencer ensemble une vie nouvelle*) gives a sad weariness to the intonation, which is attenuated in the more clipped Italian dialogue. Rocco's sacrifice becomes, in the original speaking of the dialogue, if not understandable, at least more emotionally grounded. Doane's thoughts on the "pleasure of hearing" are relevant here, as she describes the "specificity of the pleasure of hearing a voice with its elements escaping a strictly verbal codification—volume, timbre, rhythm, pitch" (1980, 43). Delon's "acoustic signature," his Parisian accent, of course would be nonsensical for Rocco, the southerner transplanted to Milan; yet, hearing it reminds us of the importance of accent and intonation in thinking about characterization, performance, and the relation to the body of the performer.

In a later scene, after Rocco has improbably become world champion, he offers a toast to this family, again resorting to southern Italian dialect. The Italian audio track, in conjunction with Nino Rota's melancholy score, once again emphasizes this atavistic attachment to the rural south, which the move to Milan has destroyed. Yet again, the climax of Rocco's sententious speech ("it takes a sacrifice for the house to become strong") is delivered in an extremely tight and hyperbolic close-up, this time side-on, lingering on his cheekbone and on the plaster above his eye, the mark of the sacrifice of himself and Nadia, as the wound was inflicted by Simone after the rape of Nadia. This silent contemplation

of Rocco's face, which almost overwhelms the vocal performance, does the work of positioning Rocco again as the sacrificial victim because of whom the Parondi house might flourish; the French track reiterates that in French Delon's speech is more soulful and heartfelt, as opposed to the crisper pronunciation of the Italian dubber. The interplay between face and voice is here important in underlining the complex nature of how Delon's performance is constructed in this film, both vocally through the dubbing of his voice and in terms of cinematography that makes proximity to his face its key characteristic.

The melodramatic climax of the film, as Rocco and Simone writhe on the bed after the revelation that Simone has killed Nadia, is the magnificent height of Viscontian male melodrama, and it is significant that Delon's dialogue in the scene is mainly restricted to sobs and inarticulate cries of grief and anguish. Comparing the French and Italian audio tracks, the quality of his sobs and of this phatic communication is subtly different. Delon sounds as though he is sobbing authentically on the French dialogue track, pausing between sobs to draw breath, while the Italian version has him almost shouting or screaming, at a much higher and more insistent emotional pitch. This affective quality is important: not only does it speak to different cultural modes of emotional expression but the French version suggests that the communication of voice and body are merged and gives the illusion of authenticity of expression, that external emotion is the outpouring of inner feeling. As Jacob Smith writes in relation to language, sound, and performance style: "timbre and inflection of the voice trump words as the site of authentic or truthful expression" (2008, 96).

## Conclusion

If Delon's physique is "wrong" for the film, his fragility calling attention to the mimetic implausibility of fit of the actor to the role, his face is overdetermined by the camera. Rather than understanding that overdetermination of the face as a symptom of a homosexual director in love with his actor, can we instead read it as an attempt to overcompensate for the idea that both Delon and Rocco lack a voice, in the sense that Rocco is a dumb, feminized Sleeping Beauty and sacrificed innocent and also in the sense of Delon as dubbed star? Delon's voice is elsewhere (in what Tom Whittaker (2012, 293) calls the "ubiquitous yet elusive location of dubbing"), though it can now be reclaimed through DVD technology. If the voice of the actor is a confirmation of their authorship of the

role (thinking of Doane's description of speech "as an individual property right," 1980, 34), it is one that audiences are frequently surprisingly happy to overlook. The restoration of a spoken language is a reminder of the uncanny vocal effect caused by Delon's nationality and also makes us think further about the link between language, nationality, and the relation of face, body, and voice to the cinematic apparatus.

## Notes

- 1 See Grignaffini (1988) and Gundle (2007). On Loren, see Gundle (1995) and Small (2009); on Lollobrigida, see Buckley (2000). On masculinity and male stars in Italian cinema, see O'Rawe (2014).
- 2 Graeme Hayes agrees that Delon is a "significant figure for the construction of French national and masculine identities" (2004, 42).
- 3 Rees-Roberts argues that Delon shared this cosmopolitan persona in the 1960s with Marcello Mastroianni. Soila also aligns Delon and Mastroianni as "pan-European stars" in the early 1960s, to be read in opposition to forms of "vernacular stardom" (quoted in Gallagher 2013, 83).
- 4 Cinotto (2006) and Foot (1999) offer readings of the film that root it in the historical context of 1960s Italy.
- 5 The three principal characteristics of the voice that Wojcik identifies are the rhythm of speech (including the use of silence and pauses), the grain of the voice, and the accent (2006, 72).
- 6 Rees-Roberts similarly refers to Delon's persona in terms of "homo-narcissism" (2012, 86).
- 7 A 1962 profile of Delon in Italian sports newspaper *Totocalcio* describes him as a "mannequin" and an "actor-young lady" (*attore-signorina*) (Ponti 1962, 13). It also fixates on his beauty, claiming that "Apollo would have had to award him the prize in an all-time beauty contest," though also suggests that Delon is troubled by discussions of his beauty: "Alain is upset. He would prefer to be the Burt Lancaster type [his costar in Visconti's *Gattopardo*], who is all man. Instead, as he is, he appears almost to be wearing make-up."
- 8 See also Neale (1983).
- 9 "It does not require a special antenna to recognize the director's erotic investment in the performance of certain actors" (Nowell-Smith 2003, 212).
- 10 Miller's reading of *Rocco* is interesting in its avoidance of this kind of biographical speculation: although he comments on the narratively unmotivated beauty of Rocco and Simone and the use of "appreciative close-ups or long shots" (2008, 13),

he is more interested in the homoerotic tension between the brothers and in the ways that the erotic passivity of Delon is ultimately consigned to the “nostalgic, bereft form of the photograph,” referring to the montage of photos of Rocco as champion boxer that ends the film.

- 11 “Title brother Rocco, played by the French matinee idol Alain Delon, seems rather too pretty to be the champion boxer that the plot requires him to be” (1960, 28).
- 12 “No-one can pretend for a moment that Rocco Parondi, country boy and world-class boxer, looks like anything but the exquisitely handsome movie star who plays him, Alain Delon” (Miller 2008, 12).
- 13 See also the contemporary review by Joseph Bennett, who says: “Visconti cast Alain Delon, a Frenchman, as Rocco—at some cost in terms of his skinniness, which makes him only the unreal shadow of the boxing champion he is supposed to be” (1962, 283). The review in the Italian paper *L’Unità* complained that Delon was “perhaps worshipped a little too much by the camera” (Muzii 1960, 3).
- 14 *Rocco and his Brothers*, as mentioned, was a French-Italian coproduction (produced by Titanus with Les Films Marceau), which explains at least the economic imperative for the casting of French stars.
- 15 As he notes, “to demand a unilingual Italian soundtrack” for films such as *Rocco* and *Il gattopardo* is to “erase the linguistic polyvocality that registers the political economy of art filmmaking in the country from the 1950s through the 1970s” (2009, 87).
- 16 “To graft one language, with its own system of linking sound and gesture, onto the visible behavior associated with another, then, is to foster a kind of cultural violence or dislocation” (1985, 52). They describe voices as “as irreducibly individual as fingerprints” (1985, 49). See also Sisto (2014, 9) on dubbing as “cultural and semiotic violence” in Italian film. Nornes concurs that “dubbing is mired in corruption because it completely erases the experience of foreign sound, one of the most crucial material aspects of language” (1999, 34).
- 17 As Luyken states in relation to television audiences used to watching dubbed programs: “the strong polarization in the use of method between the ‘dubbing’ and ‘subtitling’ countries is of significance, as audience research has shown that television viewers are very strongly conditioned by the respective predominant methods and, therefore, attitudes to, as well as acceptance of, different or new methods take a long time to mature” (1991, 38).
- 18 Shochat and Stam term this a “parasitic star system” (1985, 50).
- 19 The notion of “acoustic signature” was used by Neepa Majumdar in her keynote talk, “Listening to Stardom: Considerations of Voice in Star Studies,” given at the conference on “Revisiting Star Studies” at Newcastle University, 12 June 2013. The term “cultural leveling” is used by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1968, 146). Bordwell

- and Thompson (2004, 388) talk of the “bland studio sound” of dubbed voices and go so far as to say that “dubbing simply destroys part of the film.”
- 20 In *Il gattopardo* Delon was dubbed by Carlo Sabatini, a Roman, despite the fact that Delon’s character is Sicilian. Delon’s performance as Rocco was generally praised by the Italian press, and I have found no reviews that mention the fact of his dubbing.
  - 21 The French dialogue track is now available as an option on the Eureka! Masters of Cinema DVD of the film (2008).



